

8/8/2016

Mike Curran  
PO Box 313  
Rico, Co. 1332

Shalonda Guy  
1523 Hwy. 20 E  
Mt. Ida, Ar. 1957

Dear Shalonda,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Gap Creek resource management project.

My primary focus is on the potential impact of the proposed activity on the LOVIT Trail and the lakeside view shed. For eight years now I have been actively involved in the construction and maintenance of the LOVIT trail. I have encountered many people along the way that express their gratitude for the work the Trail Dog organization has accomplished along with the enduring partnership of the Forest Service and the Corps of Engineers.

I am particularly impressed with the overtures received on a continuing basis from the mountain bike organizations and bike riders. They often comment on the beautiful vistas and the variety of vegetative types and animal species seen along the trail.

It is my hope that the Forest Service will view this project as an opportunity to **enhance** the trailside and lakeside zone. This would go a step beyond simply protecting these zones. Instead of designating a protective corridor of an established distance I would prefer to see a variable distance from the trail and shoreline that takes advantage of features like vistas, rock formations, flowering understory vegetation, picturesque old growth trees and wildlife sitings. In some cases this would mean clearing or thinning right up to the edge of the trail or shoreline. I have seen some areas along the trail where dog hair stands of pine actually encumber the trailside zone. In some cases where a building or structure may lie in the view shed heavy cover may be desired to shield these adverse features.

I would encourage you to try and restrict, if at all possible, the crossing of the trail by new or reestablished roads. Where this occurs I would encourage the Forest Service to return these crossings to a natural appearing condition through grading, seeding, etc. This should also apply to skidder operations across the trail where the trail prism has been disturbed.

I would like to see the inclusion of an enhancement alternative. I believe the selection of this alternative by the Forest Service would be seen as a positive overture toward the protection of the valuable recreation amenities in the area.

Thanks again, for the opportunity to comment and I look forward to a continued positive working relationship.

Sincerely,

Mike Curran